

15. FEEDING HABIT OF THE INDIAN POND HERON
(*ARDEOLA GRAYII*)

During a recent visit to Rapur, a small taluk headquarters village, some 22 miles due west of Gudur, I was walking along the thorn and cactus covered outer bund of the moat surrounding the ruined Rapur fort, when I noticed a Pond Heron feeding in a most unusual manner.

The bird would stalk along in the shallow water for a few feet before suddenly launching into flight, thereby disturbing the frogs, also lying in the shallow water, to leap along into deeper water and safety. As soon as the frogs moved the heron would immediately try to pick them up in flight, jabbing at the frogs until it successfully seized one, whereupon it would return to the bank and consume the frog before continuing the operation.

The whole action was most un-heron like and the bird looked like some awkward gull as it flew low over the scattering frogs, now jabbing at one and then another, almost stalling in the process as it would try to reach back for a frog it had just flown over. Whatever its methods, ungainly though they were, the bird was certainly successful for, during the course of twenty minutes' observation, it landed no fewer than six frogs, after which it sat in shapeless silence digesting its dinner.

c/o POSTMASTER,
P.O. GUDUR (NELLORE),
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[A note on herons, egrets and house crows fishing from the air is published on p. 169 of Vol. 50 (1), August 1951.—EDS.]

16. REDNECKED PHALAROPE NEAR DELHI

On 1st and 3rd June, 1951, I saw a Rednecked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) on the Horseshoe jheel, some seven miles north of Delhi. Both the place and the season seem to be exceptional.

It was in the late afternoon of 1st June that I found the phalarope and I watched it at a distance of perhaps twenty feet for nearly half an hour. As is customary with the genus when on inland waters, it was extremely tame. Ticehurst says it is very shy on the sea. It constantly swam round and round picking insects off the surface of the shallow, muddy water, its head bobbing to and fro as a waterhen's does. I did not attempt to make it fly. The surround of the much-reduced jheel was very muddy, and there seemed to be no point in disturbing it, as all essential details of plumage were visible.

The points I noted at the time were as follows: The side of the neck was dull red; in front of this was a whitish patch; the chin and throat were white, upper breast and sides grey, lower breast and under tail-coverts white (the rest of the underparts were hidden by the water). A long pale grey supercilium. The back and wings were nearly black, with pale markings. The narrow black beak, which differentiates *P. lobatus* from *P. fulicarius* even in winter